

Moniteau Creek Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan
FY 2016-2025



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John D. Sumner
Wildlife Division Chief

2/11/2016

Date

Moniteau Creek Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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CENTRAL REGION

RCT Chair


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1/25/16
Date

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Wildlife Management Chief


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2/8/16
Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Moniteau Creek Conservation Area (CA), #9735
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1996
- **Acreage:** 844 acres
- **County:** Howard
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statement of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**
 - Manage open land habitats for early successional wildlife species.
 - Restore woodland communities, as appropriate.
 - Maintain minimal agricultural row cropping for wildlife benefit.
 - Manage forest communities using best management practices.
 - Maintain a healthy Moniteau Creek riparian corridor within the conservation area boundaries.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

Desired future conditions of Moniteau Creek CA are healthy woodland and forest habitats and early successional herbaceous and wooded habitat in open lands and woodland/forest edges.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement:**

This area, or a portion thereof, was acquired with federal funds and donated to the State to provide fish and wildlife benefits and land conservation.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** None
 - B. Natural Areas:** None
- II. Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** None observed.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None
- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - 50 foot by 60 foot barn
 - 1 fishing lake (Lake 1, 2 acres) with associated dam
 - 2 fishless ponds (1 acre combined)

- 3 wetland berms, 4 associated water control structures
- 4 gravel parking lots
- 3 campsites
- 1 mile of minimally improved field access/hiking trails

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

A. Deed Restrictions/Federal Interests: Uses of land acquired with federal funds may not interfere with the purpose for which it was acquired. Federal funds may also be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.

Restrictive covenants were included in the deed for this area upon its transfer from the United States of America via the former Farmers Home Administration to the Missouri Conservation Commission. This transfer was under Section 354 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. Generally, this area may not be subdivided and must be managed for the preservation and maintenance of wetland habitat, as well as protection and enhancement of plant and animal habitats and their populations.

General Covenants include: The land shall not be subdivided; the land shall be perpetually managed for the maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat, the conservation of soil and water, and maintenance of the natural plant species and ecology of the area; public use and recreation may be allowed on the area consistent with the dominant uses for fish and wildlife and the conservation of the natural environment of the area; structures and improvements shall not be placed on the property except as are consistent with the purposes of the easement and these general covenants.

Covenants pertaining to wetlands and floodplains include: wetland characteristics of the land shall not be altered by draining, dredging channeling, filling, diking, impounding and related activities; dwellings, barns, outbuildings or other structures shall not be built within the 100 year floodplain of the area; the vegetation or hydrology of any wetland within the area shall not be altered in any way or by any means including cutting or mowing, cultivation, grazing, harvesting wood products, burning, placing of refuse and wastes, provided that the manipulation of vegetation and water levels to maintain wildlife habitat or other conservation objectives is permitted if done pursuant to a written wetland management plan.

B. Easements:

Central Electric Power Cooperative and Howard Electric Cooperative have easements/electric distribution lines which cross portions of the area. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has some wetland easements on the area. The Missouri Department of Conservation has an access/roadway easement across private property to allow access to the area's southeast portion.

C. Cultural Resource Findings: No known cultural resources.

D. Endangered Species: None known.

E. Boundary Issues: Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Control old field invasive species (e.g., sericea lespedeza, fescue, black and honey locust, autumn olive, Johnson grass, eastern red cedar, teasel).
- 2) Manage tree stocking rates in woodland habitats.

Management Objective 1: Increase abundance of woodland indicator plants on 20 acres of woodland habitat.

Strategy 1: Apply management techniques at appropriate intervals and during various times of year to increase plant diversity on a third of woodland acres each year (Wildlife).

Management Objective 2: Control invasive plants and shrubs in woodlands, old fields and transition areas.

Strategy 1: Monitor old fields for invasive plants and shrubs including but not limited to sericea lespedeza, crown vetch, teasel, Johnson grass, tall fescue and autumn olive (Wildlife).

Strategy 2: Utilize appropriate management techniques including but not limited to use of prescribed fire, chemical application, and mechanical removal to reduce/remove invasive species (Wildlife).

Strategy 3: Monitor all areas where management has been implemented to control invasive plants to be sure efforts have been successful (Wildlife).

Management Objective 3: Manage current crop fields with annual crops, such as small grains, for early successional dependent wildlife benefit.

Strategy 1: Use permittee farming to manage 60 to 100 acres of crops, food plots, idled acres and legume fields, with a diverse crop rotation including small grains (Wildlife).

Management Objective 4: Manage the forest resources of the area to ensure health and diversity.

Strategy 1: Maintain or enhance woodland and forest habitats in accordance with Missouri Department of Conservation guidelines for maintaining forested watershed (2014) (Forestry).

Strategy 2: Comply with the USFWS restrictive covenants to conduct forest management on the portion of the area delineated as wetland (Forestry).

Strategy 3: Use the current inventory for management guidelines until updated in 2023, at which time woodland/forest management needs will be reassessed (Forestry).

Strategy 4: Conduct any prescribed timber sale according to Forestry Division sale of forest products policy, including harvest planning, use of trained loggers, best bid practices, best management practices and overall monitoring. Moniteau Creek will be designated a Streamside Management Zone in this process to help protect water quality (Forestry).

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area ponds for fishing, wildlife watering and semi-aquatic wildlife use.
- 2) Establish and maintain an adequate riparian corridor along all drainages that occur on the area.

Management Objective 1: Manage fish populations and provide public fishing opportunities in Moniteau Creek Pond and Moniteau Creek (Fisheries).

Management Objective 2: Maintain a forested riparian corridor along Moniteau Creek.

Strategy 1: Designate a Streamside Management Zone along Moniteau Creek in accordance with the Watershed and Streamside Management Guidelines (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009) (Fisheries).

Strategy 2: Reforest any streamside corridor acreage not currently supporting tree growth (Fisheries).

Management Objective 3: Ensure the wetland acres delineated in the restrictive covenants are managed accordingly.

Strategy 1: Monitor compliance of management of the wetland acres bound by restrictive covenants. As needed, make contact with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure appropriate management is occurring (Wildlife).

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain and build positive relationships with neighboring landowners.
- 2) Provide the public with recreational and educational multiple use opportunities.

Management Objective 1: Maintain and build positive relationships with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Ensure communication occurs with adjacent neighbors and, if at all possible, any issues are resolved in mutually agreeable terms (Wildlife).

Strategy 2: Maintain no shooting zones near sensitive boundaries (Wildlife).

Management Objective 2: Provide area users with compatible and inviting educational and recreational multiple use opportunities.

Strategy 1: Maintain accurate area information and regulations through the Conservation Atlas database, area brochures, posted information and staff contacts with area users (Wildlife).

Strategy 2: Promote compatible, safe uses of hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, nature photography and other outdoor interests (Wildlife).

Strategy 3: Monitor and document multiple use conflicts or concerns. Identify timing, seasons and special use permit options to minimize and resolve potential conflicts (Wildlife).

Strategy 4: Work with Protection Division personnel to enforce existing regulations and identify any needed changes (Wildlife & Protection).

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Ensure all easements are properly documented.
- 2) Evaluate land offered as additions to these areas.

Management Objective 1: Document all easements.

Strategy 1: Use Geographic Information System to ensure that any easements are properly located and within the Lands database. (Wildlife)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, eliminate in-holdings, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Terrestrial Resource Management										
Objective 1: Increase Woodland Indicator Plants										
Strategy 1		X			X			X		
Objective 2: Control Invasive Plants										
Strategy 1	X		X		X		X		X	
Strategy 2		X		X		X		X		
Strategy 3	X			X			X			X
Objective 4: Manage the forest resources										
Strategy 1	X		X		X		X		X	
Strategy 3								X		
Strategy 4								X	X	X
Aquatic Resource Management										
Objective 1: Manage fish populations/provide public fishing										
	X		X		X		X		X	

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Moniteau Creek CA exists to provide both upland and bottomland public land wildlife habitat in Howard County. It provides the public with upland and bottomland wildlife habitat and associated hunting and recreation opportunities; creek and impoundment fishing; and related outdoor activities. The area is comprised of several farms that were consolidated after they came under ownership of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. These lands were transferred from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to the Missouri Department of Conservation for conservation purposes.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Forest/Woodland	356		42
Old Fields	200		24
Grassland	153		18
Cropland	106		12
Wetland	25		3
Impounded Water	2		<1
Infrastructure	2		<1
Total	844		100
Stream Frontage (Moniteau Creek)		~12,000	

Public input summary:

The draft Moniteau Creek Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period September 1–30, 2015. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from 2 respondents (Appendix A). The Moniteau Creek Conservation Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they were incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through Moniteau Creek Conservation Area public comment period

Concerned with area users trespassing on neighboring property. Suggests better marking area boundaries.

The planning team agrees that Department staff will continue to post boundaries so that they are clearly marked in order to avoid any confusion by areas users. The planning team also

recommends neighboring landowners adequately post their boundaries to assist with enforcement of trespass laws.

Opposes bicycle use on this area.

No trails currently exist, nor are any planned or proposed, for bicycle use on this conservation area.

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *Missouri watershed protection practice recommended practices for Missouri forests: 2014 management guidelines for maintaining forested watersheds to protect streams*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Conservation Commission of Missouri.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and water managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Cover Types

Figure 3: Easements

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Moniteau Creek Conservation Area Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

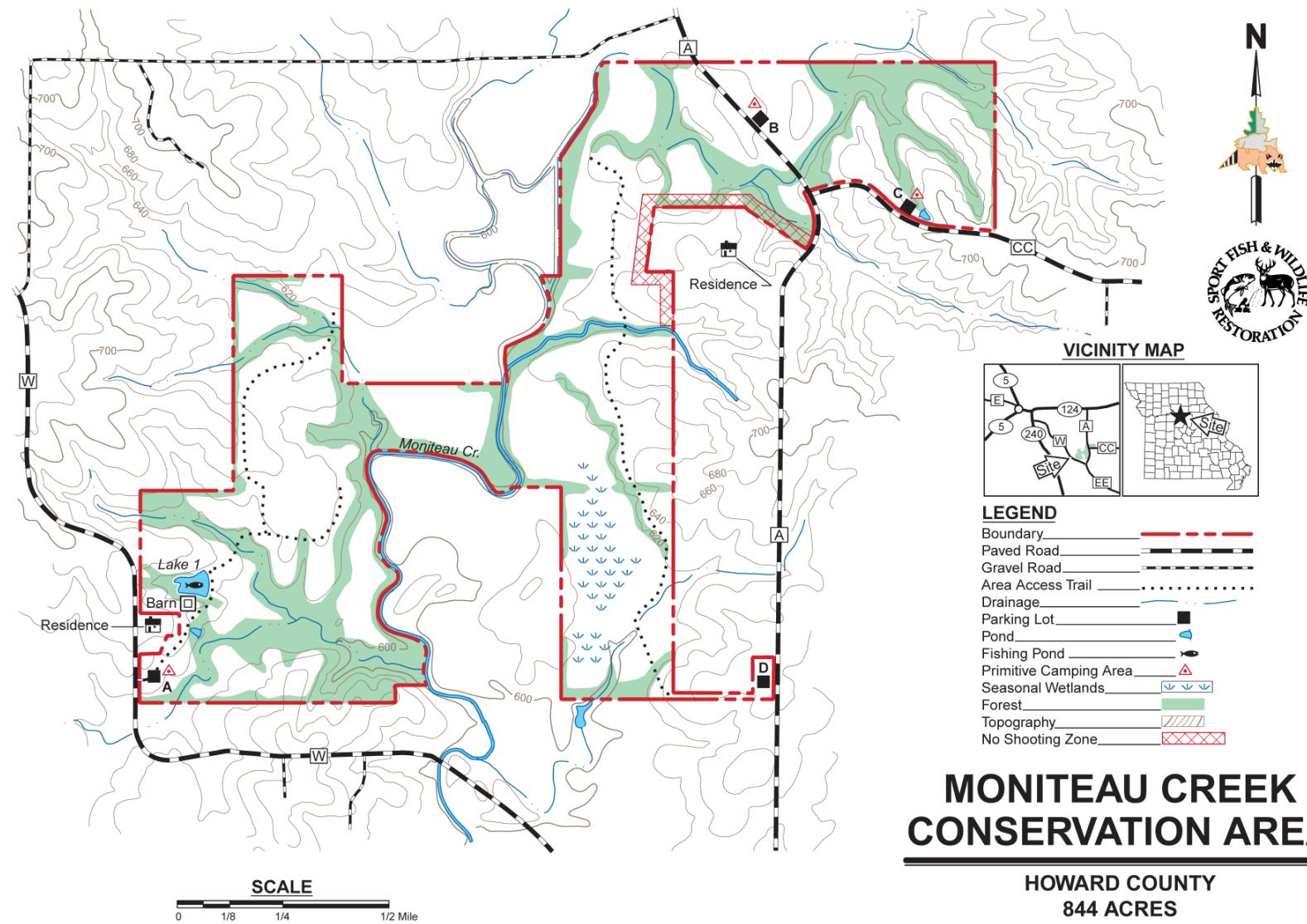


Figure 2: Cover Types

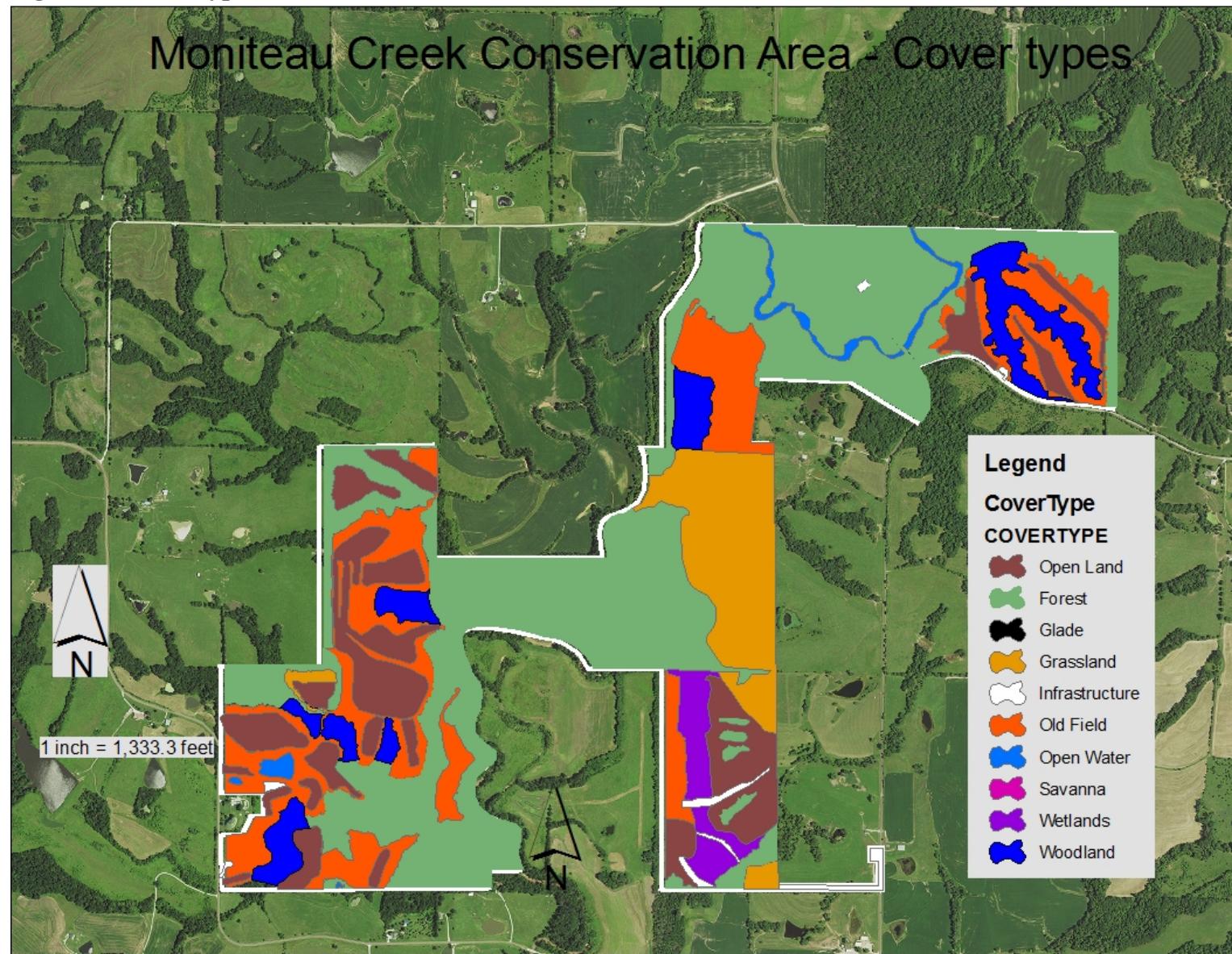
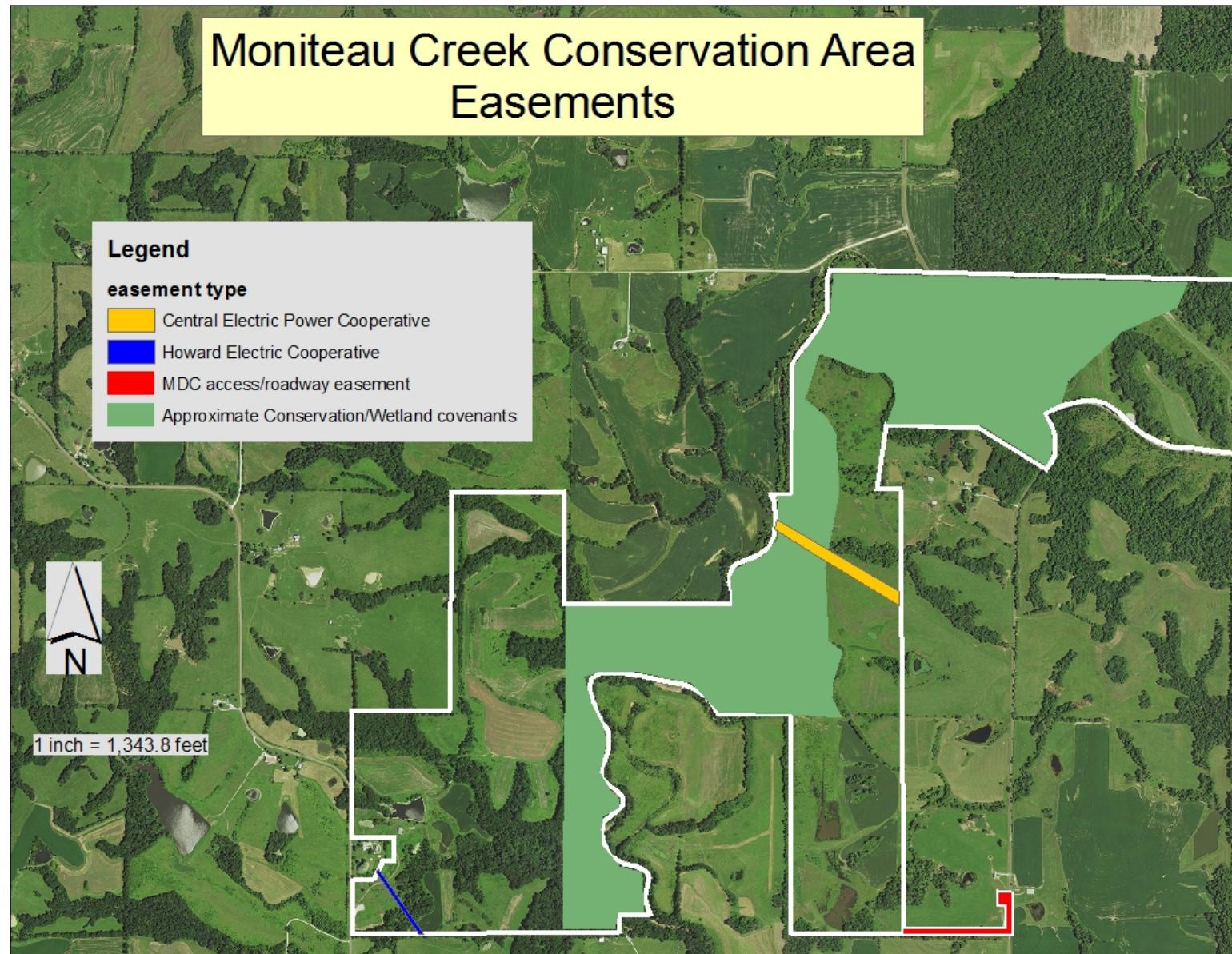


Figure 3: Easements



Appendix A. Moniteau Creek Conservation Area Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2015):

If at all possible is there signage available to make it clear that our property across the road is not part of the conservation area. Last deer season we had hunters that had actually gotten in our deer stands. I have purchased some "No Trespassing" signs but they are thin plastic and I haven't put them up yet.

Thank you

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996:

<http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video:
<http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous:

http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb_dangerous.htm .

For more information: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.